

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

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INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

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AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 0664

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, HO

SUBJECT: MEETING OF LIBERAL CENTRAL COMMITTEE

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 472

BEGIN SUMMARY. THE CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE LIBERAL PARTY MET ON FEBRUARY 15-16. THE MAJOR PURPOSE OF THE MEETING WAS TO PUBLICIZE THE POSITION OF THE PARTY ON MAJOR ISSUES. THE ORATORS STRONGLY CONDEMNED THE DE FACTO MILITARY REGIME AND CALLED FOR A RETURN TO FREE ELECTIONS AND CONSTITUTIONAL RULE. THE MEETING SHOWED THAT MODESTO RODAS ALVARADO IS IN COMPLETE CONTROL OF THE LIBERAL PARTY MACHINERY. END SUMMARY.

1. THE CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE LIBERAL PARTY HELD A MEETING IN PARTY HEADQUARTERS IN TEGUCIGALPA ON FEBRUARY 15-16. IN ADDITION, TWO DELEGATES FROM EACH DEPARTMENT ATTENDED.

2. JOSE PINEDA GOMEZ, PRESIDENT OF THE COMMITTEE,
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CHAired THE MEETING. THE ENTIRE COMMITTEE WAS IN

ATTENDANCE INCLUDING THE PARTY'S LEADER, MODESTO RODAS ALVARADO. THE "DEMOCRATIC LEFT" FACTION OF THE PARTY LED BY CARLOS ROBERTO REINA DID NOT PARTICIPATE.

3. THERE WERE NO ELECTIONS OF ANY KIND OR ANY INTERNAL PARTY REORGANIZATIONS. THE MAJOR PURPOSE OF THE MEETING WAS TO MAKE PUBLIC STATEMENTS ABOUT THE PARTY'S POSITION ON IMPORTANT ISSUES. THE MAIN ITEMS TREATED WERE A RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONALITY, THE DE FACTO MILITARY REGIME, THE HONDURAS-EL SALVADOR DISPUTE AND THE NEW AGRARIAN REFORM LAW.

4. PINEDA MADE A SPEECH DEFINING THE PARTY'S POSITION ON THE RECENT JALAPA MEETING OF CA PRESIDENTS AS IT RELATES TO THE HONDURAS-EL SALVADOR DISPUTE. HE EMPHASIZED THAT ANY RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM WHICH DID NOT FULLY DEFEND THE SOVEREIGNTY AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF HONDURAS WOULD BE CATASTROPHIC FOR THE COUNTRY. HE ALSO STATED THAT HONDURAS' TRADITIONAL POLICY OF SEEKING A "GLOBAL AND SIMULTANEOUS" RESOLUTION OF ALL ISSUES SHOULD BE CONTINUED. PINEDA SAID THAT PRESSURES TO REACH A RESOLUTION OF THE CONFLICT ARE CAUSED BY THOSE INTERESTS BEING DAMAGED BY A FAILURE TO RESTRUCTURE THE COMMON MARKET. HE REMARKED THAT ANY PROPOSED RESOLUTION OF THE CONFLICT SHOULD BE RATIFIED BY THE NATIONAL CONGRESS AS STATED IN THE CONSTITUTION. HE POINTED OUT THAT ANY AGREEMENT WHICH IGNORED THAT REQUIREMENT WOULD BE JURIDICALLY INVALID.

5. OTHER ORATORS, INCLUDING RODAS, CONDEMNED THE DE FACTO MILITARY REGIME. THEY CLAIMED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS INDIFFERENT TO THE MISERY CONFRONTING THE COUNTRY AND OF BEING BADLY ADVISED BY "POPULIST" FORCES. RODAS SAID THAT THE COUNTRY HAD SUFFERED FROM ADMINISTRATIVE DISORDER, FACED ECONOMIC CHAOS AND IS TOTALLY INCAPABLE OF RESOLVING NATIONAL PROBLEMS AFTER TWO YEARS OF MILITARY RULE. ALL THE SPEAKERS CALLED FOR A RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONALITY AND FREE ELECTIONS AS THE ONLY SOLUTION TO THE INEFFECTIVENESS OF THE REGIME.

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6 A PARTY POLICY DECLARATION CONDEMNED THE NEW AGRARIAN REFORM LAW AS BEING AN ATTEMPT ON THE PART OF "MARXIST TECHNICIANS TO DESTROY THE MIDDLE CLASS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE" IN THE SAME MANNER AS WAS DONE IN COMMUNIST COUNTRIES. IT POINTED OUT THAT THE LAW WOULD DAMAGE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AND WOULD LEAD TO GREATER HARDSHIPS FOR CAMPESINOS. THE DECLARATION ALSO STATED THAT THE LAW IGNORED THE LARGE AREAS OF AVAILABLE LAND THAT

COULD BE BROUGHT INTO PRODUCTION THROUGH COLONIZATION EFFORTS.

7. COMMENT. THE MEETING'S DECLARATIONS TENDED TO REITERATE THE STATEMENTS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS AND CONVENTION. HOWEVER, THE CONDEMNATION OF THE AGRARIAN REFORM LAW WAS MORE SEVERE THAN PREVIOUSLY. THIS IS PROBABLY TRUE BECAUSE IN PREVIOUS MEETINGS THERE HAD BEEN ONLY PROPOSED DRAFTS RATHER THAN AN ACTUAL DECREE.

8. THE MEETING SHOWED RODAS' COMPLETE CONTROL OF THE PARTY MACHINERY. THE "DEMOCRATIC LEFT" FACTION HAS CEASED TO PARTICIPATE IN FORMAL PARTY ACTIVITIES. REINA STRONGLY CRITICIZED THE MEETING AS BEING A GOOD EXAMPLE OF THE ARROGANT MANNER IN WHICH RODAS RULES THE PARTY. RODAS CLEARLY HAS NO QUALMS ABOUT RUNNING MATTERS TO SUIT HIMSELF. HE HAS BEEN MEETING RECENTLY WITH THE LEADER OF THE NATIONALIST PARTY, RICARDO ZUNIGA AGUSTINUS, IN ATTEMPTS TO WORK OUT MORE EFFECTIVE WAYS TO CONFRONT THE REGIME ON A UNITED BASIS.
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